Fowl
Feathered
Review
GALLONS
ACCURATE AT ANY DELIVERY OR PRESSURE
№ 244

ISSUE № 244:
Neurasthenia/ 神经衰弱

ABOUT THE ASSEMBLAGE

The FFR is no longer a journal or even a "Necrosign." It's a shared frequency—specifically the sound of a 1988 Mitsubishi Mirage idling in a parking lot at 3:00 AM. We don't curate; we just leave the back door unlocked. We are a collection of "important locals"—those who are durable because we are too tired to be fragile. If the work feels like it's trying to be "Art," we will likely use it to level a wobbly table.

THE STAFF (THE CUSTODIANS OF THE SINK)

- Virgil Kay: Still the Final Arbiter, currently preoccupied with the aerodynamics of a falling bagel.
- Silent Bill: Promoted to *Chief of Tactical Non-Sequiturs*. He handles the "Necessary Pauses" by simply walking out of the room mid-sentence.
- Unkie Bob: Now specializing in *Casual Entropy*. He doesn't sabotage the structure anymore; he just forgets to tighten the bolts.
- The Unnamed Dishwasher: (Not on the masthead). He just crashed in. He's

wearing a windbreaker. He's currently scrubbing a scorched pot with the intensity of a man performing heart surgery. Don't look at him. He's the soul of the operation now.

THE PERPETUAL PENDING PLEDGE:

The Review is not for sale; it is freely given. All incoming funds are Sacramental Offerings consecrated not for service rendered, but to sustain the metabolically necessary Obsession8888. Our official registry is no longer numeric; it is an unassailable frequency defined as Vi · ▬ · 432Hz.

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SUBMISSION PROTOCOL (CASUAL MODE)

1. The Work: Send us 2 to 953 fragments. They can be poems, paintings, or transcriptions of overheard arguments about bowling.
2. The Presentation: No "Cover Letters" listing your awards. We don't care where you went to school; we care if you can stand up after taking a hit. Tell us your favorite type of industrial fastener instead.
3. The Offering: The Perpetual Pending Pledge remains. It's still free. But if you must send something, send a 12-inch sandwich.
    - The Kewpie Clause: If there is no Kewpie Mayonnaise on the sandwich, Virgil will use your manuscript to wipe the counter. Kewpie is the only thing standing between us and the "Absolute Cosmic-Cluck."

4. The Delivery: Drop it off. Or don't. The auction is never over, and we're just waiting for the next honk.

Note: If you hear the sound of dishes clattering in the back, ignore it. It's just the frequency of the house.

1Digital Park and Ride: Send to fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com

1Physical Park and Ride: 250.50₪ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401. *ERRATUM: If the 432Hz frequency sounds more like a rattling heat shield on a compact car, do not adjust your ears. The rattling is the poetry. The 9-volt battery is dead. Long live the 9-volt battery.*

"Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco."

— Virgil, The Aeneid

FRAGILE

☼ ⚓ ✉ HOBO COLLEGE AT AUTHORITY 087 — BANGOR FIELD NOTE (CANINE-CONVEYED VERSION) ☼ ⚓ ✉

by Zane Costello

Delivered by dog cart of uncertain lineage at that hour when frost begins rehearsing its arguments with extension cords and electricity pretends to be neutral. The driver — a teenager temporarily classified as "summer help" — steered according to signals that may have been semaphore or aurora. The dog performed the remainder of the ethics.

The envelope bore three stamps. One had already resigned.

The refrigerator box had again achieved municipal relevance. Two archivists received this with professional optimism; a third expressed hostile incredulity; a decommissioned parking meter — seconded

to the Committee on Public Discouragement — adopted a posture of philosophical refusal. In earlier BIIS pamphlets (irregular series; pagination governed by appetite), the meter had cultivated a reputation for ontological gloom and an unwillingness to accept quarters on ideological grounds.

Light entered through the cardboard seams like underfunded gospel in a logging town: oblique, stubborn, faintly apologetic. It behaved less like illumination than like a weary cathedral that had lost its nave in a tax sale and was now leaning into whatever human-sized receptacle remained.

Freddy Bubbles, presently attired in mirrored disco trousers reflecting lantern flame, electrical entanglements, and his own unclaimed remorse, was reminded of a childhood hallway that may not have existed within any Euclidean jurisdiction. Sunlight had once misfiled itself down the wallpaper,

then vanished when the house migrated five inches to the left.

The logical inference — endorsed by no licensed surveyor — was that buildings migrate the way thoughts migrate: sideways, slowly, and always when your back is turned. A dissenting memorandum proposed that an unsupervised photocopier had been flattening and re-stapling geography at 11"×17" for over a decade.

☞ Action item: Inspect blueprints for hoofprints.

Subpar Bear entered sideways, this having become the only sanctioned vector since the Fire Marshal's disagreement regarding the flammability rating of metaphors.

He was swaddled in flannel containing three winters, one romance conducted entirely in a

produce aisle, and a speculative position in the honey market that had ended in sweet insolvency. Beneath it, a jacket assembled from obsolete newspapers exhaled the aroma of printer's ink, damp basements, and civic duty past expiration.

As he slid his arms into the sleeves, a headline concerning a bond referendum shivered and retired from relevance. The word obsolete glowed in his peripheral vision like a lighthouse unwilling to decommission itself merely because all the ships had been repossessed.

In his paws — for the sake of taxonomy we will call them hands — he cradled a set of bongos. He played not from habit but from the dim conviction that rhythm constituted the last functioning bureaucracy willing to stamp his forms without prejudice.

He tapped once.

Time slowed to the speed of a committee considering whether to adjourn.

He tapped again.

Time removed its glasses and requested clarification on several minor procedural points.

He tapped a third time.

Time filed for a continuance and promised, without visible sincerity, to circle back.
Along the baseboard an extension cord trembled like prey sensing narrative.

Observation: The cord quivers. Interpretation: Energy is arriving from an unauthorized watershed. Alternative: The tremor belongs to history itself, swimming upstream through copper.

⁂ BIIS Occasional Circular No. 71: On Tremors Observed in Domestic Wiring

During Episodes of Narrative Instability (mimeograph; coffee damage; one page believed eaten by raccoon).

A skillet was unfolded with the ceremony normally reserved for treaties and novelty-sized cheques.

Klupskies struck the pan with a sound halfway between blessing and subpoena. They hissed with ancestral determination, patties of institutional hope browning discreetly like minutes prepared by a clerk who still believes in margins.

The smell — dense, apologetic, faintly heroic — expanded into multispecies recollection:
• Kitchens with oilcloth tablecloths and radios tuned permanently to livestock reports. • Hands scented with bait, detergent, and the low-grade panic of overdue rent. • Mothers

who had left the document but retained control of the margins.

In a long-out-of-print Culinary Annex monograph, Dr. Hrebenárová suggested that recipes are the forwarding address grief uses when its mail is returned. No one present had read the monograph. Everyone understood. Thus hunger entered the symposium disguised as curriculum.

Freddy Bubbles discovered he was standing.

"Fashion," he informed the dented metal walls, "is not fabric. It is velocity."

He seized a nub of chalk that may once have aspired to lightning and transformed the refrigerator interior into a grayboard of engineering speculation.

The Hotshot Configuration:

• Cylinder — compression chamber for unsent letters. • Piston — moral vector shuttling between intention and outcome. • Boiler — hope reservoir: overpressurized, badly patched, prone to seasonal explosion.

As he sketched, the chalk exerted reciprocal authority, bending his wrist into corrective geometries. The diagram began designing him. His posture acquired an engineering slouch. His eyes adopted the torque-assessment squint of a man evaluating the load-bearing capacities of other people's lives. Nearby, a gold star sticker — previously affixed to Ken's forehead during a regrettable trust exercise — caught the lamplight and glowed with the shrill optimism of mandatory recognition. ☆

※ Marginal note (unknown hand): Authenticity unverified; compliance effect measurable.

Ken poured coffee with the composure of someone who had survived three definitions of “emergency” and was currently auditing a fourth. The dented percolator produced a trickle the color of reprimand.

It did not steam dramatically. It did not steam inspirationally. It emitted a thin, continuous column of vapor like a soul in no particular hurry to depart.

Outside, Bangor maintained its default expression: austere, faintly surprised to still exist.

Managers from Elsewhere arrived without fanfare but with identifiable plumage. Their blazers possessed a metallic sheen suggestive of moss that had grown too near abandoned infrastructure. Their briefcases pulsed at irregular intervals as if incubating larval policy.

They accepted klupskies with the solemnity of men attending a wake for job security.

“Fool density is trending upward in this corridor,” one observed, consulting a clipboard whose pages were blank except for a single coffee ring. “If it increases further, transit itself may become conversational.”

From the river, freight horns answered in mournful call-and-response, sounding like an advanced metaphysics seminar conducted by nervous moose.

Bangor, in its entirety, was drafted into the document. Frost on telephone wires crystallized into exclamation points.

Observation: The town waits.

Interpretation: Towns wait for events large enough to justify regretting later.

Alternative: Memory waits. Towns merely provide scenery.

A rubber stamp descended.

INTERDIMENSIONAL LABOR EXCHANGE — ACTIVE

The ink, briefly lucid, wondered whether it had exceeded its mandate.

Subpar Bear retreated to a corner and selected another jacket stitched from newspapers so old their mastheads had become folklore.

Power outages, mill closures, fishery disputes rustled as he shrugged them on.
Language, deprived of readership, is opportunistic.

A thought surfaced like driftwood in black water: had Tuesday ever truly existed, or was it merely a scheduling rumor circulated by calendars with agendas?

This speculation led inevitably to the Pantera idling outside — official BOQ conveyance of Authority 087. Its engine coughed liturgy without hymnals.

From the seam between carburetor and conscience emerged a chant:
Triple triple. Timbits. Maple doughnuts. Leafs.

The syllables rolled across asphalt with the ceremonial gravity of minor heresy under corporate sponsorship.

Students piled into its low philosophical architecture carrying notebooks, crate radios, and unresolved childhoods. Ken, deputized as chaperone by unanimous apathy, delivered a brief lecture on moss etiquette in formal sectors.

They accelerated through the Tree Streets at interpretive velocity. Parking meters resumed their pessimistic applause.

Meaning, as usual, emerged from impact.

That is how they discovered the Pants Cave.

The Pants Cave revealed itself not as a place but as a policy failure.

It occupied the basement of a building that had once sold diaphragm clutches to respectable mechanics and now warehoused garments fallen between taste and necessity.

Rows of trousers, skirts, jackets, overalls hung from metal rods bowed under the collective weight of abandoned identity.

A fisherman's sweater had unionized. Buttons served as delegates. A velvet sleeve blinked. A trench coat cleared its throat as if preparing testimony.

Observation: Garments inhale atmosphere and exhale narrative. Interpretation: Style survives by metabolizing weather and returning anecdote. Doubt: We are ambulatory hangers upon which textiles conduct historical experiments.

Subpar Bear tapped the bongos.

Time slowed.

He tapped again.

Time lodged a courteous protest.

A third tap.

Time rolled over and authorized temporary suspension of procedure. ⧖

Denim and wool arranged themselves into tableaux of past winters, past shifts, past attempts to resemble someone with plans extending beyond Friday.

Freddy regarded him with an expression that, in warmer architecture, might have matured into tenderness.

“What have we learned?”

Silence thickened like unattended stew.

Frost tested the basement mortar with exploratory fingers. Bangor rotated an imperceptible degree on its axis of modest catastrophe.

Subpar Bear, whose internal processes moved at the speed of geological apology, considered the jackets, the skeptical meters, the gull auditors, the idling Mirage, the car that believed itself a minaret.

"Style," he said finally, "is what survives the night."
The sentence rose, struck the joists, and escaped through a foundation crack, entering the wider ecosystem like an invasive proverb.
By morning it would have:
• Been stamped twice (crookedly) onto a BIIS circular. • Appeared as graffiti on a decommissioned lobster boat. • Manifested in the muttering of a gull reviewing tidal invoices. • Printed faintly on a thermal receipt lost in the Mirage glove compartment beside a warranty that had never existed.

Back in the refrigerator box — now undeniably an annex of municipal feeling — the extension cord ceased trembling. The light settled into workable gray. The parking

meter, having listened with professional interest, declined to comment.

✦ § † BIIS FINAL MARGINALIA — HANDLE WITH COMIC CAUTION † § ✦

☞ Fools still preferred; fewer pre-existing conditions. ☞ Competence negotiable, especially off-season. ☞ The next session begins the moment this page is used to level a wobbly table. 📄🕹

Husqvarna
3:17 AM

STILLWATER AUTHORITY DISTRICT — TRANSMISSION LOG 10-14-🐊

NODE: TRAILER 1 (1954 Terry Canned Ham) — LAMINATE PROTOCOL / FUSION SINGULARITY

RESIDENCY: ONE Size (Archivist / Zinemaker)

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The trailer breathes. Marmoleum ripples underfoot, not quite horizontal, not quite vertical, the yellow of bruised bananas pressed into a topography that claims to know your ankles. One Size sits, spinning a mail-art envelope on the laminate table, the oxidizing apple beside it now a globe whose continents rotate with faint dissatisfaction.

OBSERVATION → INTERPRETATION → DOUBT

Light through the porthole angles, fracturing the apple into a moose,

then into a typewriter, then dissolving entirely. Perhaps it is a sign from a dimension where trees cough up letters instead of sap. Perhaps the apple is simply brown and hungry. The air tastes of old newsprint and propane.

TIME-PRESSURE ZONE: 3:17 AM HUM

The refrigerator sighs. Forty-seven seconds of tonal grief. Outside, the Stillwater fog presses against aluminum skin as if to be admitted; the trailer exhales. A photograph of Steinbeck sways in sympathetic rhythm. He appears ready to comment on industrial fruit storage or perhaps just wants a soda.

COLLISION MONTAGE

[Receipt from Husqvarna Chainsaw Repair, 1998.]

[Photocopy: crow's foot labeled Corvus brachyrhynchos / Witness.]

[Child's crayon sketch: house aflame, red as belief.]

[Fragment from Bangor Codex, p.44: “The wheel is the eye of the road.”]

DREAM LOGIC / SYMBOL RECURSION

The wheel turns.

→ Trailer moves, though engineless.

→ Pinetrees conveyor-belt past, packaged memories.

→ Zip codes cage letters.

→ Apple is a boat.

→ Floor is lake; table a vessel; photograph a tide table.

Repetition sculpts meaning; symbols mutate: wheel, apple, photograph, sap, fog.

THE ARRIVAL OF SAP-MAN

Boots rattle screen. Aluminum rings. Grizzle McLachlan enters, sap-resin flannel, six-pack of Grade “A” Pine Sap Soda hissing alive.

"We give birth to ourselves across time and space," he gravel-voices.

One Size drinks. The syrup coats the throat, the room tilts, the trailer liquefies into a yellow tide, the Mirage outside lifts off, suspiciously sentient.

ESCALATION OF THE UNCANNY

Floor liquefies. Photograph of Steinbeck speaks tide tables. Laminate table becomes lake. Apple navigates. Fog kneels in reverence.

RHythmic TRANCE

Wheel turns. Sap burns. Fog waits.

Wheel turns. Sap burns. Fog waits.

Wheel turns. Sap burns. Fog waits.

We are moose men. Aluminum scrolls unrolling. Boot leather for replacements.

MAIL-ART / MARGINALIA

Cross-checked against Fowl Feathered Review: Apple-Moose Typographicon anomaly consistent with Extension-Cord Treasurer, Ø3.

Sap-Man's left pupil: clock-face, counting backward.

BIIS FOOTNOTES

H.P. Lovecraft, On the Psychoactive Properties of Maple Syrup and Trailer Geometry, unpublished draft (1927).

† Dr. Aris Thorne, Vehicular Anthropomorphism in the Post-Industrial Rust Belt, University of Maine Press (1984).

‡ Clarence P. Wetherbee, Preliminary Observations on Bells Heard Through Fog, BIIS Occasional Paper (1958).

§ Tobias K. Flannery, Weather Events That Display Poor Judgment, Northern Meteorological Amateur Review (1951).

CLOSING ITERATION

The can is empty. Room rights itself. Marmoleum re-solidifies. Grizzle gone. Door sways. On the table: condensation circle cradling a paper boat, folded from a Whole Earth Catalog page.

☞ Verify humidity levels.

☞ Did the trailer move?

☞ Inventory: One (1) apple, brown. One (1) paper boat.

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NODE EXTENSION — CINEMATIC MAIL-ART MONTAGE

Trailer 2 dinette replaced; rain outside; letter from Mongolia taped to wall seemed to blink, although photocopy insists it may only suggest blinking.

Soda cans hiss gently: Grade "A" Pine Sap Soda, circular motto, "We give birth to ourselves across time and space."

Fog presses Trailer 3; moose photograph edges forward; page margins protest.

Not faster.

Not slower.

Simply continuing.

Delivered via Dog Cart Courier at 3:17 a.m.; bell rang twice—or perhaps insists it did.

☞ Verify weather patterns; possible symbolic moose migration.

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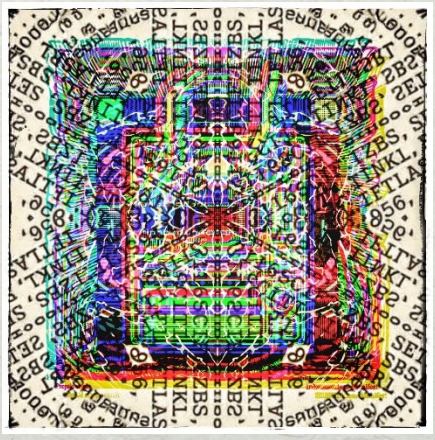
FUSI0N SINGULARITY SENTENCE EXAMPLE

The river appeared orderly, although closer inspection revealed improbable alignment of pilings, a phenomenon classified in several municipal surveys as “structural improvisation,” recalling a childhood morning when docks seemed arranged to whisper secrets of hidden geometries, suggesting harbors are

negotiations between water and optimism, unless of course the reproduced manuscript subtly altered perspective during transmission.



by Kippy Nightbloom

CONTINUATION FRAGMENT

// Tree Street Codex, Bangor Sector

294238

THE MOTHER FREQUENCY (1977–1983, and continuing)

The year the yellow suitcase vanished, Miriam's mother—Joan, 34, thin as October light—began washing dishes with such slow deliberation that the water would cool to room temperature before the last fork was rinsed. She stood at the kitchen sink for hours, hands submerged, watching the street below through the window

that faced Maple, where leaf-piles gathered like small graves no one bothered to bury.

Observation:

She did not cry. Crying would have been a kind of temperature change, a weather event with a beginning and end. Instead Joan achieved something more remarkable: a perfect stasis, a holding pattern that allowed her to stand at that sink for six years without ever actually finishing the dishes. Miriam, growing from eight to fourteen, learned to eat directly from pots to reduce the workload, but still her mother stood there, scrubbing the same blue plate in slow eccentric circles—downward pressure only, the kind that builds strength without requiring ascent.

Documentation:

The radio stayed on. Not loudly—Joan kept it at the threshold where human voices became almost birdsong, where you couldn't

quite make out words but could sense the presence of other people still speaking somewhere, still continuing. AM stations mostly: talk radio bleeding into weather reports bleeding into farm commodity prices bleeding into the hum that filled the spaces a husband used to occupy.

At 3:17 a.m. the signal would sometimes drift, catching fragments of distant broadcasts—Montreal, maybe, or ships out on the Atlantic—and Joan would pause mid-scrub, plate dripping, listening for something she couldn't name. Miriam, awake in her attic room, could hear the radio's frequency shift like a door opening in another dimension, and she understood even then that her mother was tuning not to voices but to the specific texture of absence, learning its exact pitch and rhythm.

Interpretation (Professor Carburetor Inkblot, BIIS Occasional Paper No. 34-8):

“The mother does not wash dishes; she performs a metabolic cartography of abandonment, mapping the weight of each fork against the father’s departure velocity. Observe: she never washes knives. The knives remain in the drawer, clean, untouched, as if sharp edges might cut through the stasis she’s so carefully maintained.”

☞ Marginalia in Joan’s hand (discovered years later on a water-damaged grocery list):
Knives remember. Forks forget. Spoons just continue.

THE LAUNDRY EQUATION

Joan took the yellow suitcase—different one, but same color, as if she’d ordered a replacement from a catalog of departed husbands—to the State Street laundromat every Sunday. Miriam came along, homework balanced on a juddering dryer, watching her

mother separate darks from lights with the precision of someone sorting evidence.

The ritual:

1.
2. Whites in machine 3 (always 3, even if others were available)
3. Colors in 7 (the one with the slightly bent door that required exact pressure to close)
4. Delicates hand-washed in the industrial sink, Joan's hands red and raw, fingers pruning like she was becoming part water herself

She never used the seating area. Instead, she stood between the machines, eyes on the portholes where clothes tumbled in their small cosmos of soap and spin. Sometimes she'd press her palm against the glass, feeling the heat and vibration, and Miriam recognized the gesture from the kitchen sink vigil—the same listening quality, as if fabric and water might eventually reveal where the

first yellow suitcase had gone, what street it turned down, what lie it told itself to justify never coming back.

Uncanny notation:

Twice—no, three times—Miriam saw her mother's reflection in the porthole show a different woman: younger, laughing, a version of Joan from before the departure, before the radio, before the sink became an altar. The reflection would blink (not the machine light flickering, but actual eyelids closing and opening) and then resolve back to the woman standing there in 1979, 1981, 1983, hands raw, expression smooth as cool dishwater.
Joan never mentioned it. Miriam never asked.

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THE SCALE (A RECURSIVE MEASUREMENT)

There was no smart scale in the Maple Street house, no Twin Health app, no sensors whispering metabolic secrets. But Joan weighed herself daily on a analog scale so old its needle trembled perpetually between 118 and 119 pounds, unable to decide, stuck in its own eccentric loading pattern.

The equation Joan never spoke aloud but Miriam later understood:

Weight-of-mother-before-departure: 127 lbs
Weight-of-suitcase-that-left: ~22 lbs
(estimated, packed)
Weight-of-mother-after: 118.5 lbs
(approximate, trembling)
Deficit: 8.5 lbs

Conclusion: Joan had photocopied herself at lower resolution, details bleeding out with

each reproduction until what remained was a functional outline—still capable of dishes, laundry, radio-listening, porch light maintenance—but missing some essential weight that held her to the earth with full gravity.

Miriam, watching from the bathroom doorway at age ten, understood that her mother was slowly becoming light enough to float, and that all the dish-washing and laundry-hauling were eccentric exercises designed to keep her tethered. Downward pressure. Controlled descent. Never ascent—ascent was too dangerous, required too much hope.

BIIS Occasional Note, Dr. Fizzy Lampwick (colleague of Inkblot, specializing in Domestic Gravitational Anomalies):

"The child watches the street because the mother can no longer watch anything but water. Someone must maintain the vigil. The

eight pounds Miriam later loses are not her own—they are the weight she has been carrying on behalf of a woman who became too light to guard anything, even herself."

THE PORCH LIGHT COVENANT

What Joan could still do—the one act of watching she never abandoned—was the porch light.

Every evening at 5:47 p.m. (never 5:45, never 5:50, always 5:47, for reasons lost to whatever calculus governed her interior life), Joan would flip the switch for the front porch light. Yellow bulb, 60 watts, casting a small warm circle onto the steps where frost gathered in late October, where leaves collected, where eventually—years later—Miriam would place a jack-o'-lantern as tribute to continuity.

The light stayed on until 6:23 a.m.

Not dawn. Not sunrise. 6:23 exactly.

Miriam timed it once with a stopwatch: 12 hours, 36 minutes of illumination. She never discovered the significance of those numbers, though she suspected they matched the duration of some promise made before she was born, or the length of a shift her father once worked, or the time it takes a suitcase to travel from Maple Street to whatever latitude swallows men who don't come back.

But this: every neighbor within three blocks knew that if Joan's porch light failed to come on at 5:47, something was wrong. Mrs. Hargrove two doors down, the Volvo-driving professor on Elm, the Chinese family who hung red lanterns—they all watched for that yellow glow the way sailors watch for lighthouse beams. Joan, who could no longer watch the street, had become the beacon the street watched instead.

The reversal Miriam inherited:

If the mother becomes the light, the daughter must become the watcher. If the mother descends into stasis, the daughter must learn to climb. If the mother loses eight pounds and floats untethered, the daughter must carry that weight forward until she's strong enough to set it down slowly, eccentrically, with control.

THE LAST DISH (1989)

Miriam was twenty when Joan finally finished the dishes.

It was a Tuesday in March, no specific anniversary, no obvious trigger. Miriam came home from her shift at the library to find the kitchen empty, the sink dry, every dish put away in cupboards she'd forgotten could close

all the way. The radio: off. The silence: breathing.

Joan sat on the brown couch (the same one that would later migrate to Miriam's Fern Street apartment, already patient, already archiving) with her hands folded in her lap, and she looked at her daughter with the expression of someone surfacing from deep water.

"I'm done," she said.

Not The dishes are done. Just: I'm done.

What happened next (accounts vary):

Version 1 (Official): Joan moved to Augusta to live with her sister, got a job at a dental office filing insurance claims, sent birthday cards with grocery store gift certificates, visited twice a year until she didn't, faded gently into the demographic of mothers-who-left-differently-than-fathers-but-still-left.

Version 2 (Miriam's dream-flight memory): Joan stood up from the couch, walked to the front door, opened it at exactly 5:47 p.m., and stepped into the porch light's yellow circle. The light lifted her—not fast, not slow, simply continuing—until she rose above Maple Street like a paper lantern released at a festival, her silhouette growing smaller against the cosmos until the triangles and circles of tree branches obscured her completely. The radio came back on by itself, playing static that sounded like dishwater, like laundry spin cycles, like the trembling needle of a scale that could never decide.

Version 3 (BIIS Archival Fragment, provenance unknown): There was no Joan. There had never been a Joan. The woman at the sink was a metabolic projection of Miriam's future self, a digital twin generated backward through time, showing the eight-year-old what happens when watching becomes weight and weight becomes watching and the only way out is to finish what was

started, plate by plate, flight by flight, pound by pound.

Professor Carburetor Inkblot's final note on the matter:
"Doubt all versions equally. The truth is photocopied at such low resolution that only the essential outline remains: a mother, a daughter, a promise, a light. The rest is water."

BOSTON MEDICAL LIBRARY
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FRANCIS A. COUNTWAY
LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

CODA: THE YELLOW SUITCASE (Still in Transit)

Miriam drags the yellow suitcase to State Street Laundromat every week, same route her mother walked, though she uses machine 5 now because 3 was removed in 2004. She washes her dishes by hand in the Fern Street apartment, but quickly, efficiently, never standing at the sink longer than necessary. The porch light—she doesn't have a porch,

but she keeps a small lamp in her window, and yes, it goes on at 5:47 p.m., off at 6:23 a.m., and yes, Mrs. Hargrove's daughter (who inherited her mother's house on Elm) sometimes checks to make sure it's burning.

The eight pounds Miriam has lost through Twin Health's metabolic mapping—they are not her mother's eight pounds, not exactly. But they are the weight of understanding that watching can be active instead of static, that guardianship doesn't require floating away or sinking into dishwater stasis. That you can climb trees and descend stairs and lose weight and gain strength and still keep the promise, still light the lanterns, still make sure no one on these streets feels unwatched.

In the dream-flight, Miriam sometimes passes another figure: thin, weightless, hands still pruned from decades of water, rising on a different trajectory. They don't speak—there's no air up here for speaking—but they acknowledge each other with the slight nod of

women who have both carried yellow suitcases, both stood at sinks, both learned that the only way to survive a departure is to become the thing that stays.

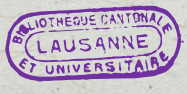
The rain continues.

Not faster.

Not slower.

Simply continuing.

Joan, wherever she is—Augusta, the cosmos, a sink in another dimension—hears it too, and remembers when rain was just rain, before it became the sound of someone leaving, someone staying, someone finally setting down what was never theirs to carry in the first place.



☞ Final marginalia (handwriting unidentified, possibly the photocopier itself):

The queen was once a girl in a tree. The girl was once a daughter at a sink. The sink was

once a window. The window was always watching. The watching continues.

🐕 Dog Cart Express courier notation:

Delivered 3:17 a.m., package contained one plate (blue), one radio (still playing), coordinates for a porch light that no longer exists. Recipient: Unknown. Status: Continuing.

[End Fragment // Handle with care // The mother becomes the frequency // The frequency becomes the watch // The watch becomes the weight // The weight comes down // Slowly // With control // 👑🎂❤]

From the Bangor Codex, Tree Street Sector, reproduced without permission from the original which may or may not have ever

existed. If found, please return to the laundromat on State Street, machine 5, inside the yellow suitcase that's always in transit.
—K. Nightbloom, Department of Eccentric Studies, Bangor Institute of Interpretive Surveillance

FFR – SIGNAL 432Hz

MOBILE POLYMER LETTERPRESS RITUAL — VEND-O-VISION EDITION (TIN ROW FIELD MANUAL)

By Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

The issue begins on a prepaid phone because permanence is suspicious. A folding wireless keyboard opens like contraband architecture across his lap. The mouse travels in short nervous migrations over a flattened pizza box. Fixed-width characters assemble into civic grids. Titles are negotiated. Divider lines harden into levees. Every paragraph must justify its existence in monochrome. One Size saves the file three times under three contradictory names.

When the layout feels almost correct, One Size carries the signal to the coin-operated television — the Vend-o-Vision — a dented metal reliquary containing a small convex

black-and-white screen that once presided over laundromats and bus terminals. A digital TV converter box from the early oughts is zip-tied to its flank like a prosthetic organ. Phone becomes media player. Media player becomes RF whisper. The converter hums with bureaucratic nostalgia.
He inserts a quarter.

Time begins.

The ASCII page flickers into phosphor life — soft at the edges, morally unforgiving. Weak poems collapse instantly into grey weather. Bold headlines survive the blur and gain authority. Columns either breathe or suffocate. The tuner knob is rotated with priestly doubt. Snow fills the screen. He retunes. The page returns, smaller now, more honest.

When the timer clicks off the editorial decision is final. He does not argue with machines that eat coins.

Thermal printing happens at night. The device chatters like a mechanized cricket, extruding warm ribbons of temporary certainty. Inkless black that will one day fade to rumor. He stacks the sheets under a tire iron for discipline.

Morning means fluorescent negotiation at the copy counter. He has an understanding with the manager — density pushed past what the manual recommends, toner laid down thick as municipal asphalt. Clear film emerges carrying the negative universe of the issue. He leaves quickly, as if transparency itself were incriminating.

Back at the camper on Tin Row the plate laboratory unfolds from a milk crate: UV nail lamp, shallow tray, brush with missing bristles, binder clips that bite with unnecessary enthusiasm. Exposure is timed by whichever brass-heavy electronic track is currently looping. Polymer hardens where light insists. The rest dissolves under cold

water into soft historical amnesia. Headlines rise in relief like newly zoned districts.

Printing takes place in the back seat because sitting inside the act improves registration of the soul if not the paper. A plywood bridge spans the upholstery. The tabletop press is clamped down with devotional torque. Ink is rolled until it makes the correct insect sound. Each sheet is fed with care that borders on superstition. Impression depth varies according to lunar rumor and suspension spring fatigue.

Outside, a one-dollar disco light rotates over cracked pavement near the sleep clinic's insomniac halo. African-Baltic brass EDM leaks into the upholstery and rearranges the molecules of exhaustion. Passing headlights briefly proof the drying stack.

Fifty copies become real. Sixty if faith holds.

Finished issues are wrapped in twine and distributed along laundromats, bulletin boards, library vestibules, and the passenger seats of unlocked cars. The photopolymer plates are archived in a shoebox labeled URGENT / WEATHER. The digital converter remains warm long after shutdown, as though still translating signals from a decade that refuses burial.

Tomorrow he will insert another quarter and begin again.

Continuity is the only circulation.

ONE SIZE / ATLAS OF NEURAL AND URBAN SPACES

By Bok Choy

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Carnival Row

——————————▲

| Ferris wheels spin vertigo
| arc over rooftops
| restless alleys
| shadows count themselves
| lost decimals
|

Rollercoaster Ridge

／
／

／ Bridgeways hum
／ tension / laughter — solitude
／ glowing dashed arteries
／ feed Monastery Alley
／ where camper thoughts
＼ fold into rust-stained parcels

＼

＼ One Size leans left / American order

\ white beard lamplight catching
\ yellow Ray-Bans refract fog into circuits
\ hands chart miles / traction wheel snaps /
elastic sings
\ nervous energy in inches
\ city = nervous system
\ wandering node
\ blood + ink / mapping

Triangles — Creeks — Catwalks
folds
cobbled overhead
interior unspools
tape & carnival
camper tied to roof
desire strapped tight

Recharge Rivers
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
each mile a sigh
each alley a pulse
each bridge a vow
streets & thoughts converge
path continuous somewhere
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

One Size arrives?
center of all he's measured,
traced,
and loved
` ` `

The Bibliographic Perimeter

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What's Happening!